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ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed to introduce secondary educators to a three-part training session that was developed to make Texas teachers more aware of the subtle gender-biased behaviors that can emerge during interactions between teachers and students in three typical settings: a teacher advising a student for upcoming registration, a rehearsal for a one-act play, and a typical day in an agriscience classroom and shop. The booklet begins with a brief introduction and a pretest for teachers to take before viewing the training session's three video segments, which deal respectively with various aspects of bias perpetuated by what teachers say, what teachers do, and what teachers allow others to do. The plots and main points raised during the three video segments are summarized. Presented next are sections on each of the three video segments. Each section contains the following: a list of gender equity statements demonstrated in that segment of the video, a brief discussion of the gender equity issues raised in the video segment, and a posttest devoted to the video segment. A glossary and brief reference list are included. Appended are the pretest and posttest answers. (MN)

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Achieving Equity in the Secondary Schools of Texas

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

... A Closer Look

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Dear Educator,

You play a very important role in the lives of students you come into contact with each day, and we understand you are dedicated to helping them reach their potential. However, you possess a power that you may not realize. That is, the ability to make your classroom free of gender bias. Why should you be concerned with such an issue? Let's take a closer look. . .

Subtle gender bias can be detrimental to boys and girls later in life. Students take what they learn about themselves in the classroom with them into the work place. For example, females are not taught to be risk takers and tend to be less autonomous than their male counterparts. Males also suffer from gender bias as they often create high career expectations while in school that can later lead to disappointment and frustration.

According to research, biased interaction patterns remain the same regardless of whether a teacher is a man or a woman, so we are all capable of perpetuating this problem without realizing it. By becoming more aware of our subtle gender biased behaviors, we can work to ensure our students receive the same learning opportunities that will benefit them after they leave our classrooms.

The video, "Achieving Equity in Texas Schools. . .A Closer Look," was developed with you in mind. A study was conducted to determine the most important gender equity issues in Texas, and these issues are presented to you in the video and study guide. Our goal is to make you more aware of subtle gender bias. Together, we can overcome this hurdle to ensure our students receive an equitable education leading to a future with more vocational and professional options.

ACHIEVING EQUITY IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF TEXAS ... A CLOSER LOOK

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The irony of gender bias and stereotyping is that it is so subtle, sometimes our good intentions are detrimental without our realizing it. We invite you to take a pre-test to measure your level of awareness regarding gender equity.

PRE-TEST

The following pre-test should be taken before reading further or viewing the video.

1. What is gender stereotyping?

2. What is gender bias?

3. How do educators promote gender stereotyping and gender bias?

4. In what ways might gender stereotyping and gender bias affect students?

5. Other than educators, what other factors contribute to gender bias and gender stereotyping in the classroom?

VIDEO SUMMARY

As a viewer of this video, you have the opportunity to take a closer look at subtle gender stereotyping and bias that students experience at school. The video features three segments that illustrate males and females in different learning environments.

The first episode occurs in a standard classroom as a counselor is advising students about the courses they should enroll in for the following year. During this segment the counselor unintentionally stereotypes the students by their gender. One example of gender stereotyping is the assigning of tasks according to gender. Males are often called upon to perform manual skills while females are called upon to perform secretarial and housekeeping duties. In the video this was demonstrated by the counselor as he asked a male student to distribute the manuals and asked a female student to circulate an attendance sheet. Again, the examples of gender stereotyping that are illustrated in this segment are very subtle and often go unnoticed; however, these practices create differences in the learning environment for female and male students.

The second segment occurs in an auditorium during a one act play rehearsal. Gender bias is demonstrated in this segment by what the teacher says to students as she directs the play. For example, an area of disparity exists in the difference in disciplinary action received by male and female students. Research indicates that males receive 8-10 times as many prohibitory control messages as their female counterparts. This pattern of gender bias is demonstrated as the director calls on the boys several times for talking instead of working, and then she expresses appreciation to the girls for working on their tasks. Although gender stereotyping was addressed in the first segment, the second segment further illustrates this practice as the boys are shown building the props while the girls sew the costumes. This is another example of how duties are assigned by gender.

What teachers do and allow students to do also perpetuates gender bias in the classroom. The third segment displays an agri-science classroom and laboratory where students are learning about small gasoline engines. The teacher not only demonstrates subtle gender bias, but he also allows students to act in ways that perpetuates gender biased behavior. One tendency among educators is to provide male students directions on how to complete a task while performing the task for female students. This behavior is dramatized in the shop as students work on their small gasoline engine projects, and the teacher gives the boys instructions yet does the work for one of the girls. By helping this girl, the teacher is allowing her to act helpless rather than giving her an opportunity to solve her own problem and gain confidence. This is only one of several ways in which gender bias creates different learning environments for female and male students. Other examples of gender stereotyping and what teachers say, do and allow in various school settings are demonstrated in the video.

Gender Stereotyping

SEGMENT #1
GENDER STEREOTYPING

The gender equity statements below are demonstrated in the first segment of the video.

- Teachers and counselors tend to guide females toward vocational courses in home economics, health, and business and office education. Likewise, males are encouraged to enroll in courses in industrial technology, and agriculture and agribusiness. (Grayson, 1990)

- Teachers' expectations are related to students' performance. For example, when teachers expect more from girls in reading they do better than boys. Likewise, boys tend to excel more in the areas of mathematics and science as teachers expect them to perform better in these areas than girls. (Sadker & Sadker, 1982)

- Instructional materials showcase males in most of the stories, illustrations, occupations and biographies. Bulletin boards and visual aids can also reinforce stereotyping and sex bias. (Sadker & Sadker, 1982)

- Males are called upon to perform tasks that require manual skills while females are called upon to conduct housekeeping chores and perform secretarial tasks. (Grayson, 1990)

DISCUSSION — SEGMENT #1

At first glance the counselor and teacher in the episode you just witnessed may not seem to be stereotyping students by gender, but a closer look will reveal how the boys and girls did not receive the same treatment.

First, did you notice the counselor guided the students into selecting different types of classes for second period? The young women were encouraged to take typing while young men were encouraged to take drafting. One step you can take toward creating gender fairness is to **guide students toward courses best suited for their interests and talents without regard to gender.**

The counselor also discouraged Rosa from taking calculus while encouraging Craig to take the same course. In order to achieve gender neutral schools we must **maintain the same expectations for boys and girls in all subject areas.** Also, did you notice that as the counselor stressed the importance of considering career plans in the selection of future courses, he maintained eye contact with the boys? This non-verbal pattern reinforces the suggestion that he probably holds higher expectations for the male students.

Do you recall that the counselor asked Joey to pass out the schedule books while Sharla was asked to begin an attendance sheet? This is another form of gender stereotyping. To overcome this it is best to **avoid assigning tasks on the basis of gender.** Asking a boy to perform manual skills while asking a girl to perform housekeeping or secretarial skills further reinforces expectations according to gender that can inhibit students from attempting non-traditional roles.

POST TEST – GENDER STEREOTYPING

T/F 1. There is less stereotyping by teachers and counselors when advising female students enrolling in vocational courses than when advising male students.

T/F 2. When a teacher expects more from females in a beginning reading class, they actually perform better than males.

T/F 3. Instructional materials showcase females in most of the stories, illustrations, occupations and biographies.

T/F 4. Bulletin boards can reinforce stereotyping and sex bias.

T/F 5. Females are often called upon to conduct housekeeping chores and perform secretarial tasks.

T/F 6. Males students are encouraged more by educators to enroll in courses in industrial technology and agriculture than are female students.

What Teachers Say

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WHAT TEACHERS SAY
SEGMENT #2

The gender equity statements below are demonstrated in the second segment of the video.

- Teachers perpetuate stereotyping by the language they use and comments they make to students. (Carelli, 1988)

- Teachers interact more with males and they provide them more opportunities to respond in class. Males are asked higher level questions than females. (Grayson, 1990)

- Females tend to receive more praise for following directions and completing assignments neatly, while males tend to receive criticism in these areas. Likewise, males tend to receive praise for the intellectual quality of their work while females are criticized for the intellectual inadequacy of their work. (Sadker & Sadker, 1982)

- Males receive 8-10 times as many prohibitory control messages as their female classmates. Teachers also send more males than females to the principal's office for disciplinary reasons. (Grayson, 1990)

- Feedback given to boys and girls by teachers can result in a greater tendency in girls to perceive negative feedback as a reflection of their inabilities. (Sadker & Sadker, 1982)

DISCUSSION — SEGMENT #2

Looking back, we see the teacher asked Craig about his character's role, and she praised him for having insight. However, the teacher criticized Rosa for her lack of understanding about her character's role. If we intend to create equitable learning climates we must **interact with students equally and provide them the same opportunities to respond in discussion. We must also ask all students higher level questions.**

Females tend to receive more praise for following directions, while males tend to receive more criticism in this area. For example, in the last segment, after criticizing the boys, the teacher praised the girls by saying, "Thank you for doing what I asked you to do." To overcome this type of bias we must: **evaluate students' performance equally; expect neatness from all students, not just the girls; praise the intellectual quality of the students' work regardless of whether they are boys or girls; and, avoid criticizing boys more than girls for their academic performance.**

Recall from the last segment that teachers often assign tasks according to gender. This segment illustrated this tendency further as the young women sewed costumes while the young men built props.

Remember Johnny and Dee Dee? They both were asleep, but the teacher reacted to them differently. Creating gender-fair classrooms means we must **discipline students on the basis of their misconduct rather than their gender. Discipline girls as well as boys for misbehavior in class.** Keep in mind that males receive 8-10 times as many prohibitory control messages as females and are sent to the principal's office more frequently.

Perhaps you recall the teacher telling Rosa, "You're a housewife!" There are terms in our vocabulary such as "housewife" that contribute to gender bias. Remember, a homemaker may be male or female. It is important to **use non-sexist language.** For example choose neutral words such as police officer instead of policeman.

POST TEST – WHAT TEACHERS SAY

T/F 1. Teachers interact more with female students and provide them more opportunities to respond in class.

T/F 2. There is little difference in the level of questions asked of male and female students.

T/F 3. Males tend to receive more praise for following directions and completing their assignments neatly.

T/F 4. Females and males commonly receive the same punishment for misbehavior.

T/F 5. More males are sent to the principal's office than females for disciplinary reasons.

T/F 6. There is a greater tendency in girls to perceive negative feedback as a reflection of their inabilities.

What Teachers Do
&
Allow Students To Do

SEGMENT #3
WHAT TEACHERS DO & ALLOW STUDENTS TO DO

The gender equity statements below are demonstrated in the third segment of the video.

- Boys create more response opportunities for themselves. Boys are more likely than girls to disrupt the teacher to get attention in class. Girls are discouraged from being assertive while boys are rewarded for such behavior. (Grayson, 1990)

- Teachers call on males more frequently and allow them to dominate in discussions, in problem solving experiences and sometimes in the use of classroom materials. (Grayson, 1990)

- Females tend to initiate their ideas with less confident statements such as "I'm not sure this is right. . .," thereby justifying their answers. (Sadker & Sadker, 1982)

- Teachers are likely to give male students directions on how to do a task, but they have a tendency to perform the task for females. (Sadker & Sadker, 1982)

- Girls are less persistent at solving problems and more likely than boys to exhibit learned helplessness. Girls are more likely to blame poor performance on lack of ability rather than a lack of effort. (Sadker & Sadker, 1982)

DISCUSSION — SEGMENT #3

Let's take a closer look at the teacher's interaction with the students in this last episode. First, the teacher directed a question to Dee Dee. She responded but her answer was not what the teacher was looking for. He then directed the question to Toby, and not only did he provide a longer wait time for the response, he also prompted Toby by saying "Remember us talking about lubrication systems last period?" Consequently, Toby was able to provide him with a better answer than Dee Dee.

Teachers often allow more wait time for students they hold higher expectations for, thus the wait time for males is often longer than the wait time for females. Increase **wait time to 3-5 seconds** for all students. You will get better answers as well as more volunteers. Also, if you recall from the previous episode, it is common for boys to receive more praise than girls for correct answers. This was again demonstrated as the teacher praised Toby for his correct response.

The teacher also had a tendency to teach to the boys more than the girls. It is common for teachers to interact more with males. Research indicates this is true for both male and female instructors. To overcome this, strive to **provide equal instruction to females and males.**

If you recall, Dee Dee qualified her response by saying, "Well ...I'm not sure, but does it have something to do with being sure the parts are clean?" Females often initiate their ideas with less confident statements, so to overcome this barrier help **eliminate self put downs by recognizing and addressing these patterns.** The agri-science teacher also allowed this to happen as Jan said, "This may be a silly question, but . . ." before stating her question. Female students tend to be less assertive and demonstrate a lack of confidence as a result of subtle gender bias signals they receive.

This segment also demonstrated the subtle difference in assertiveness between the boys and girls. Jan raised her hand to get recognition before speaking, but when the teacher asked if anyone had anything to add, David spoke out assertively.

Bias was also demonstrated as the teacher praised David by saying "Excellent!" Remember from the earlier segment, it is important to praise males and females equally. However, in this case the teacher only praised the male student. In addition, the teacher went a step further by asking David a higher level question. As mentioned before, males are often asked higher level questions, and this tendency was dramatized in the last segment as none of the girls were asked higher level questions.

Notice how the male students were sitting together and the female students were sitting together. Students tend to arrange themselves according to gender. **Desegregate the students.** This will help overcome unintentional patterns such as giving more instruction to male students.

By now it should be easier for you to recognize these types of subtle gender bias behaviors. Perhaps you recall that Craig was the FFA president while Rosa was the FFA secretary. Students also practice stereotyping. It is important that we make them aware of these biased tendencies as we strive to create sex-fair learning opportunities.

# # #

Now let's look at the instructor's interaction patterns in the shop as the students worked on their projects.

Did you notice how the male students did not hesitate to interrupt in order to ask questions, but the female students raised their hands and waited to get the teacher's attention? Remember that boys create more opportunities for themselves by calling out in class to get the teacher's attention while girls are discouraged from such assertive behavior. To overcome this we must **allow equal response opportunities for males and females.** Be aware of these differences and reward both genders response time equally.

Did you notice that one of the young men working on the engine told the young women to step back so they wouldn't get dirty? Male students tend to dominate in problem solving experiences and classroom materials; consequently, we must **provide female students equal access to learning in the classroom.**

Perhaps you noticed that when the male students had questions, the teacher responded with answers or instructions. However, did you notice how easily discouraged Sharla was with her project? The teacher reacted by doing the task for her. Often teachers give males directions on how to do a task, but they have a tendency to perform the task for females, thereby forfeiting learning opportunities for females. We should always **provide instructions and assistance to students equally.**

POST TEST – WHAT TEACHERS DO AND ALLOW STUDENTS TO DO

T/F 1. Girls create more response opportunities for themselves in the classroom.

T/F 2. Boys are more likely to disrupt the teacher to get attention in class than are girls.

T/F 3. Boys are rewarded for assertive behavior in the class while girls are discouraged from such behavior.

T/F 4. Teachers call on females more frequently and allow them to dominate in discussions and in the use of classroom material.

T/F 5. When working with a problem-solving experience, the teacher is more likely to call on a male student for the solution.

T/F 6. When providing both male and female students extended directions and detailed instructions so they can do things for themselves, teachers treat males and females equally.

T/F 7. Females are more likely than males to exhibit learned helplessness.

T/F 8. Boys are more likely to blame poor performance on lack of ability rather than a lack of effort.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Many terms are related to gender equity that are similar and may be confusing. The following is a glossary of terms related to this study to clarify any misunderstandings or preconceived ideas.

Equity - moving beyond discrimination; equalizing, reforming and improving; based on the concepts of fairness, justice, and freedom from favoritism.

Gender/sex bias - the behavior resulting from the assumption that one sex is superior or more adaptable to a given situation than another.

Gender/sex discrimination - any action which limits or denies a person opportunities, privileges, roles, or rewards on the basis of their sex.

Gender/sex equity - fair and just treatment of individuals, which allows them to: choose educational programs and careers; enter programs and careers according to their needs, informed interests and abilities; and, participate fully in, and benefit from, those programs without regard to their gender.

Gender/sex-fair - policies, practices, behaviors and attitudes that reflect equality among female and male students.

Gender/sex-role stereotyping - the assumption that a particular gender possesses traditional and often rigid roles or attributes.

Non-traditional occupations/vocational areas for females - those areas that are occupied by 75 percent or more males.

Non-traditional occupations/vocational areas for males - those areas that are occupied by 75 percent or more females.

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Appendix A
PRE-TEST ANSWERS

1. **Gender stereotyping** is the assumption that a particular gender possesses traditional and often rigid roles or attributes.

2. **Gender bias** is the behavior resulting from the assumption that one sex is superior or more adaptable to a given situation than another.

3. Educators promote gender stereotyping and gender bias by:

   a. Calling on males more frequently and allowing them to dominate in discussions, in problem solving experiences and sometimes in the use of classroom materials.

   b. Being likely to give male students directions on how to do a task, but having the tendency to perform the task for females.

   c. Using sexist language and making biased comments to students.

   d. Interacting more with males and providing them more opportunities to respond in class.

   e. Asking males higher level questions than females.

   f. Giving females more praise for following directions and completing assignments neatly, while giving males criticism in these areas.

   g. Giving males praise for the intellectual quality of their work while criticizing females for the intellectual inadequacy of their work.

   h. Sending more males than females to the principal's office for disciplinary reasons, and providing males 8-10 times as many problem control messages as their female counterparts.

i. Tending to guide females toward vocational courses in home economics, health, and business and office education while encouraging males to enroll in courses in industrial technology, and agriculture and agribusiness.

j. Calling on males to perform tasks that require manual skills while calling on females to conduct housekeeping chores and perform secretarial tasks.

4. Gender stereotyping and gender bias affect students in the following ways:

   a. Teachers' expectations are related to students' performance. When teachers expect more from girls in reading they do better than boys. Likewise, boys tend to excel more in the areas of mathematics and science as teachers expect them to perform better in these areas than girls.

   b. The feedback given to boys and girls results in a greater tendency in girls to perceive negative feedback as a reflection of their inabilities.

   c. Boys create more response opportunities for themselves. Boys are more likely than girls to disrupt the teacher to get attention in class. Girls are discouraged from being assertive while boys are rewarded for such behavior.

   d. Females tend to initiate their ideas with less confident statements such as "I'm not sure this is right. . .."

   e. Girls are less persistent at solving problems and being more likely than boys to exhibit learned helplessness. Girls are more likely to blame poor performance on lack of ability rather than a lack of effort.

5. Other factors contributing to gender bias and gender stereotyping include instructional materials, bulletin boards and visual aids that showcase males in most of the stories, illustrations, occupations and biographies.

Appendix B

ANSWER KEY TO POST TESTS

GENDER STEREOTYPING

1. F
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. T
6. T

WHAT TEACHERS SAY

1. F
2. F
3. F
4. F
5. T
6. T

WHAT TEACHERS DO AND ALLOW STUDENTS TO DO

1. F
2. T
3. T
4. F
5. T
6. F
7. T
8. F

NOTES

NOTES

Capacity Building Project to Prepare Secondary Students for Non-traditional Occupations and To Eliminate Sex Bias and Stereo Typing in Vocational and Applied Technology Education

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